

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-13 AID-05 EUR-12
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4046
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY DACCA

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, SFER, IN, BG
SUBJ: INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI A-109

1. THE MEETINGS IN LONDON BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER MORARJI DESAI AND BANGLADESHI PRESIDENT GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE, GENERALLY UPBEAT COVERAGE IN THE DELHI PRESS WITH MOST HEADLINES CHARACTERIZING THE TALKS AS A STEP TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS. SUBJECTS FEATURED WERE DESAI'S VIEWS ON ASYLUM FOR BANGLADESHIS AND GENERAL ZIA'S COMMENTS ON THE INDO-BANGLADESH TREATY. IN THE FIRST MEETING ON JUNE 9, DESAI IS SAID TO HAVE TOLD ZIA THAT INDIA WOULD GIVE ASYLUM TO BANGLADESHIS WHO REQUESTED IT BUT THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO INDULGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OR ACTIONS HOSTILE TO BANGLADESH. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE SECOND MEETING JUNE 10, GENERAL ZIA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT MR DESAI WAS A "FINE MAN" AND HAD A POSITIVE APPROACH TO
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INDO-BANGLADESH PROBLEMS. ASKED ABOUT SPECIFIC ISSUES, HOWEVER, ZIA REPORTEDLY REPLIED, "ASK ME NEXT MONTH OR TWO OR THREE MONTHS LATER." IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT ABROGATING THE INDO-BANGLADESH TREATY, ZIA SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD REVIEW THE ENTIRE TREATY. "THE TREATY WAS THERE," HE REPORTEDLY SAID, "AND IT DID NOT BOTHER US."

2. IN THE MEANTIME, THE QUESTION OF BANGLADESHI REFUGEES CONTINUES TO RECEIVE ATTENTION IN THE LEFTIST PRESS. (REFAIR). THE PRO-MOSCOW "PATRIOT" JUNE 11 CARRIED A FRONT PAGE STORY DATED IN CALCUTTA ALLEGING THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO RETURNED FROM INDIA TO BANGLADESH "ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN VARIOUS TRANSIT CAMPS IN THAT COUNTRY" AFTER HAVING BEEN SCREENED OUT AS "DANGEROUS." THE PATRIOT REPEATS THE ALLEGATION THAT THE GOI AGREED TO HAND OVER THESE REFUGEES BUT ADDS THAT IT DID SO "FOLLOWING WESTERN PRESSURE ON INDIA ON THE FARAKKA AND REFUGEE ISSUES." THE CPI WEEKLY "NEW AGE" AND THE CPI-LEANING "MAIN-STREAM" HAVE ALSO KEPT UP THE ATTACK ACCUSING THE GOI OF BETRAYING THE REFUGEES, THE BORDER SECURITY FORCES OF TURNING THE "PATRIOTS" OVER TO THE "BUTCHER AUTHORITIES OF BANGLADESH" AND THE INDIAN PRESS OF DELIBERATELY BLACKING OUT THE NEWS. THE "NEW AGE" STORY ALLEGES THAT KADER "TIGER" SIDDIQUI HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT DENYING THAT HE HAS SOUGHT ASYLUM IN INDIA AND THAT HIS ARMED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WAS SPREADING THROUGHOUT BANGLADESH.

3. IN CONTRAST TO THE PRESS REPORTS OF THE GOI'S STAND ON ASYLUM FOR REFUGEES, BANGLADESHI DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER REZAUL KARIM IN CONVERSATION WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELLOR JUNE 9 WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS THE "UNSIGNED AGREEMENT" BY WHICH THE INDIANS HAD UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE DISSIDENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BANGLADESHI BASES FROM BORDER AREAS, END INFILTRATION, AND FACILITATE REPATRIATION OF BANGLADESHI. KARIM ALLOWED THAT THE REPATRIATION (ACCORDING TO HIM SOME 700 TO DATE) WAS NOT ALTOGETHER VOLUNTARY AND SOME "PERSUASION" HAD ALSO BEEN USED. KARIM EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE

JANATA GOVERNMENT IN IMPROVING INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS AND ALSO PRAISED THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOI TOWARD ITS OTHER SOUTH ASIAN NEIGHBORS. KARIM COMPLAINED ABOUT THE "CANARDS" BEING PUBLISHED IN THE CALCUTTA PRESS ABOUT THE FARAKKA ISSUE AND SUGGESTED THAT IF THE JANATA PARTY CAME TO POWER IN CALCUTTA, WHICH TO HIM APPEARED UNLIKELY, SUCH CHARGES WOULD BE MODERATED. KARIM ADMITTED THAT INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS, INCLUDING FARAKKA, HAD NOT BECOME A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN THE WEST BENGAL STATE ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN. HE EXPECTED THAT THE NEXT ROUND OF FARAKKA TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A FEW WEEKS.

GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 13-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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